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Walter Crane's picture-books

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·WALTER·CRANES·PICTURE
·BOOKS: RE-ISSUE· [7.]

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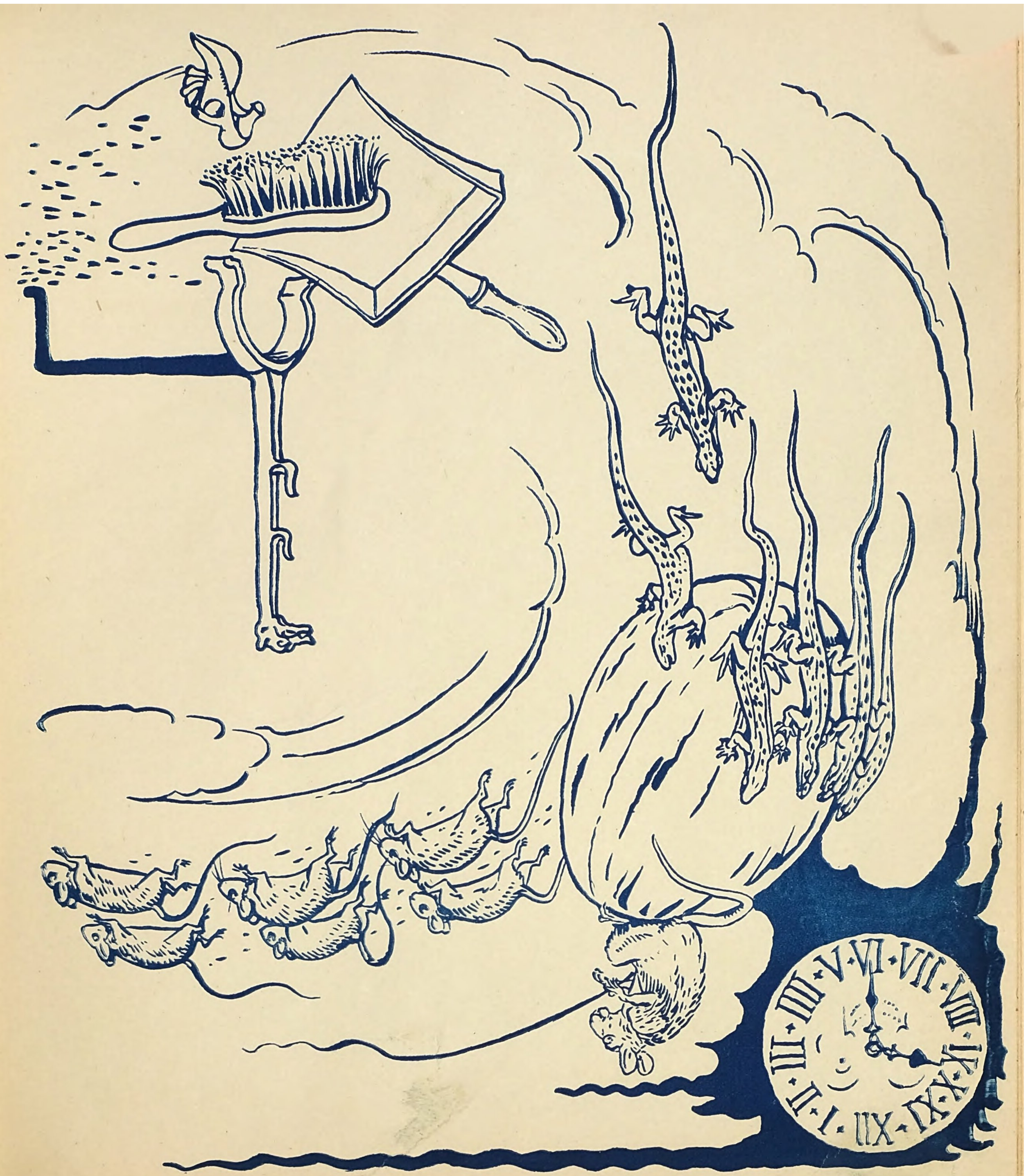

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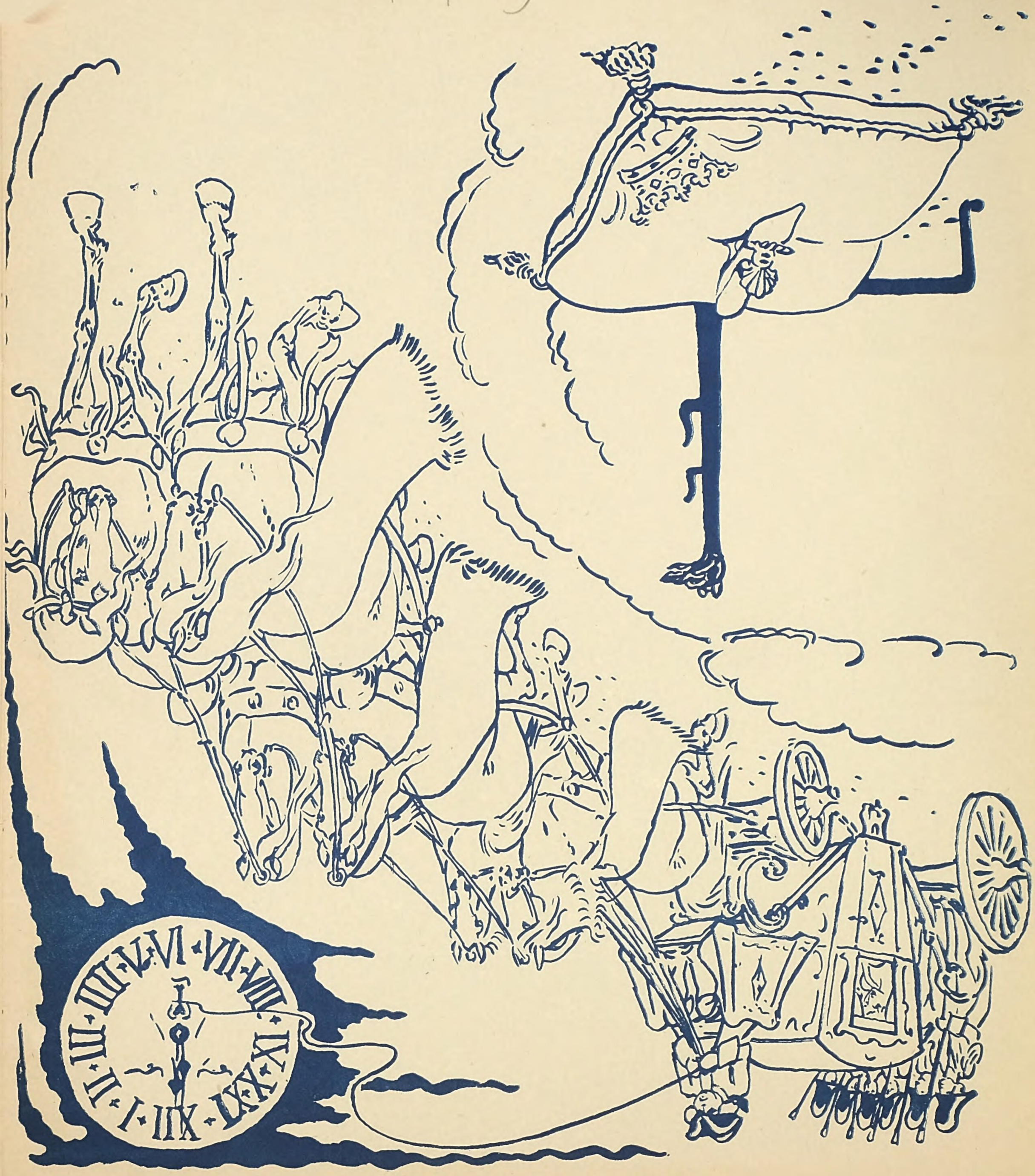

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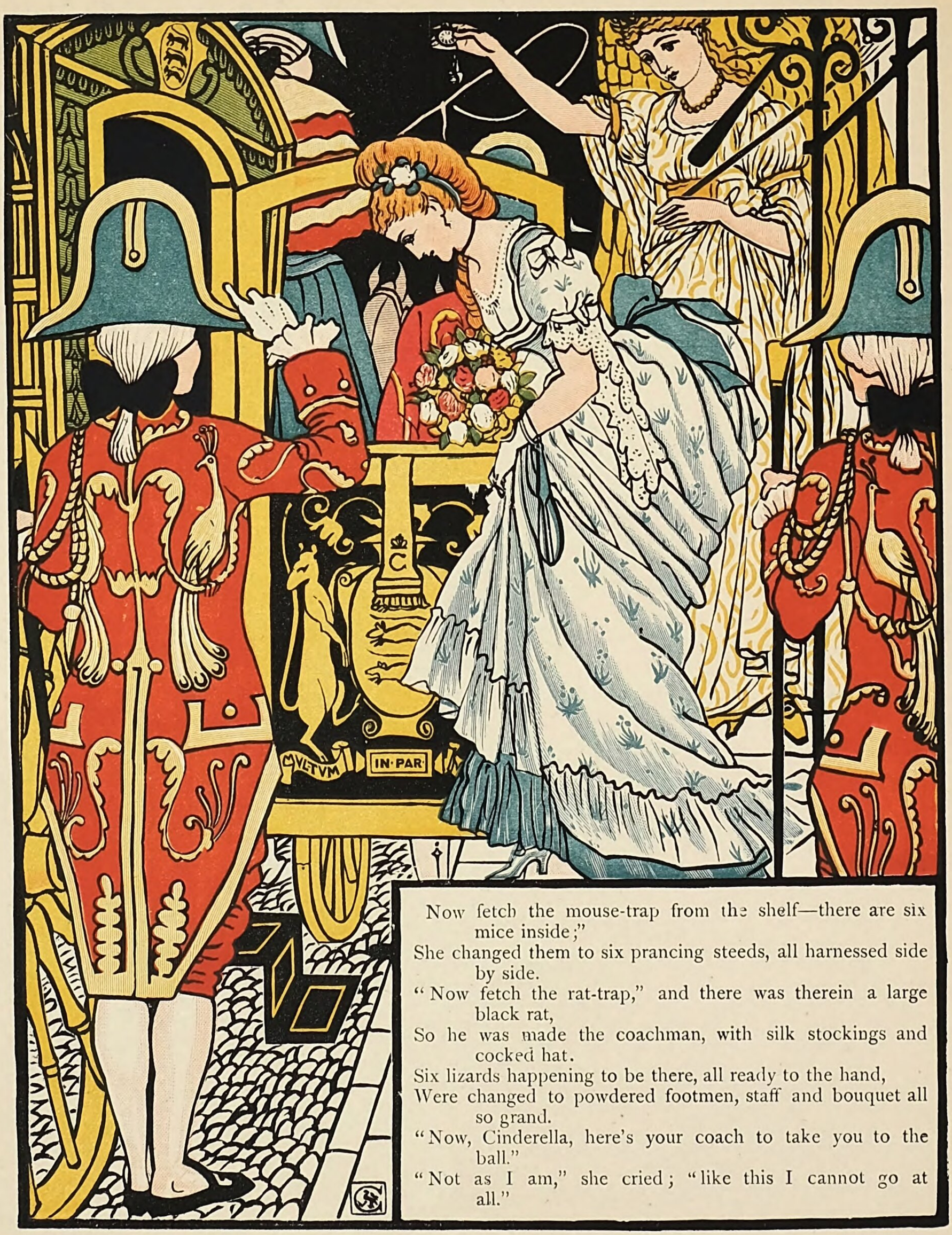
THERE was an honest gentleman, who had a daughter dear ;
His wife was dead, he took instead a new one in a year ;
She had two daughters—Caroline and Bella were their names ;
They called the other daughter Cinderella, to their shames,
Because she had to clean the hearths and black-lead all the grates ;
She also had to scrub the floors, and wash the dinner plates.
But though the others went abroad, did nothing, smiled, and drest,
Yet Cinderella all the time was prettiest and best.
The King who ruled in that country, he had an only son,
Who gave a ball to all the town, when he was twenty-one ;
And Caroline and Bella were invited, and they said,
"Cinderella shall leave scrubbing, and act as ladies' maid."

They dressed themselves so fine in silks, and pearls, and
flowers, and lace,
Poor Cinderella hadn't time to wash her pretty face.
When they started for the ball, full of haughtiness and pride,
Poor Cinderella felt quite sad, and sat her down and cried.
She had not cried much longer than a quarter of an hour,
When a wonderful bright creature appeared upon the floor,
Looked compassionately on her, and said in accents mild,
"I am your Fairy Godmother, so cry no more, my child:
I know that you are sad, and that your sisters are unkind:
Now go and fetch for me the largest pumpkin you can find."
She went and fetched the pumpkin, and the Fairy shook her
wand,
And changed it to a splendid coach. with cushions rich and
grand.



Now fetch the mouse-trap from the shelf—there are six
mice inside;"
She changed them to six prancing steeds, all harnessed side
by side.
"Now fetch the rat-trap," and there was therein a large
black rat,
So he was made the coachman, with silk stockings and
cocked hat.
Six lizards happening to be there, all ready to the hand,
Were changed to powdered footmen, staff and bouquet all
so grand.
"Now, Cinderella, here's your coach to take you to the
ball."
"Not as I am," she cried; "like this I cannot go at
all."

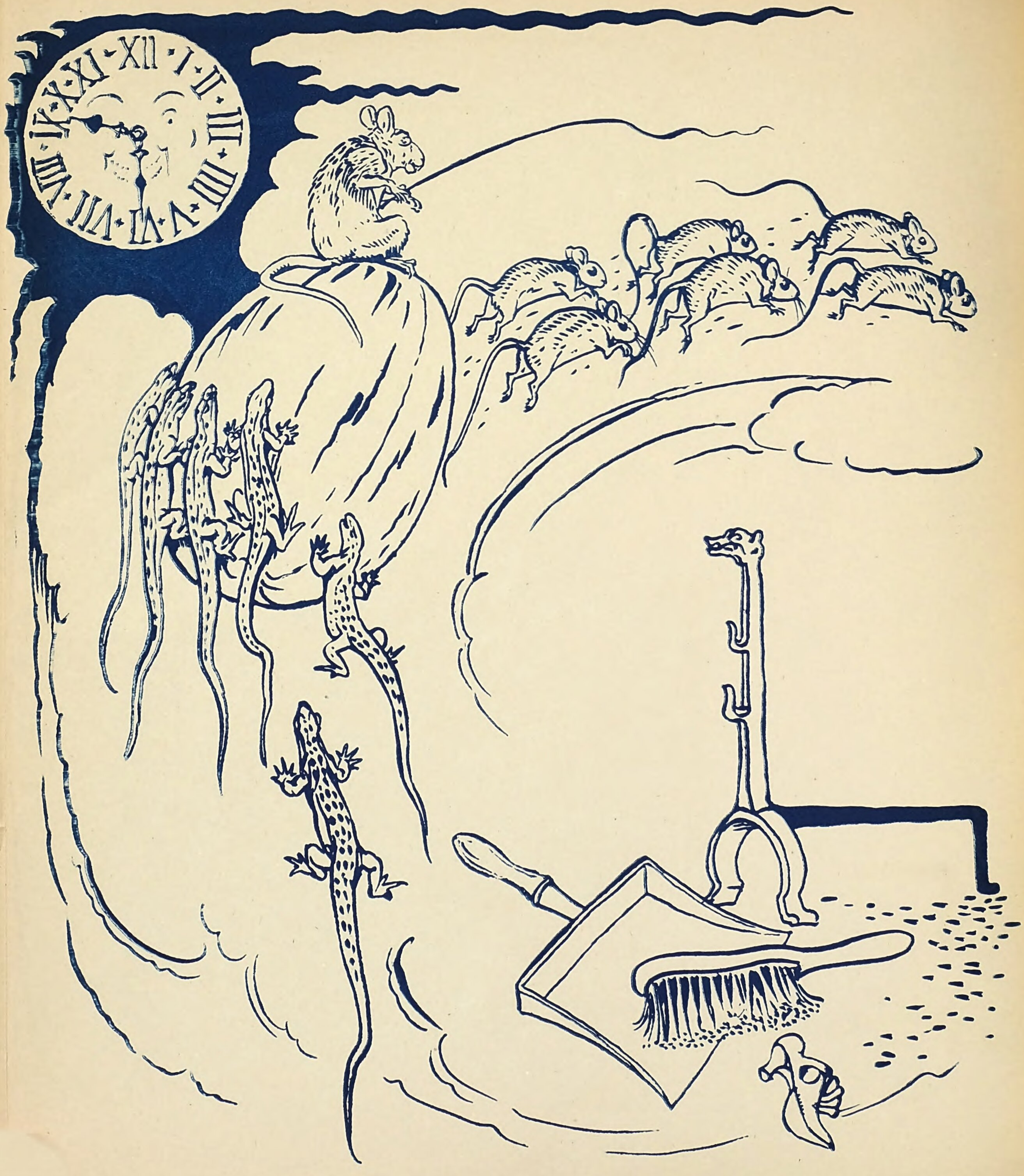
And then the Fairy raised her wand, and touched the shabby gown—
It turned to satin, trimmed with lace, and jewels, and swans-down.
Her face was clean, her gloves were new, her hair was nicely curled,
And on her feet were shoes of glass, the neatest in the world.
"Now, Cinderella, you may go ; but take care to return
Before the clock strikes twelve, or else you'll see your carriage turn
Into a pumpkin once again, your horses into mice ;
Your coachman, footmen, will become rat, lizards, in a trice,
And you yourself the cinder-girl will once again become ;
So mind that when the clock strikes twelve you must be safe at home."

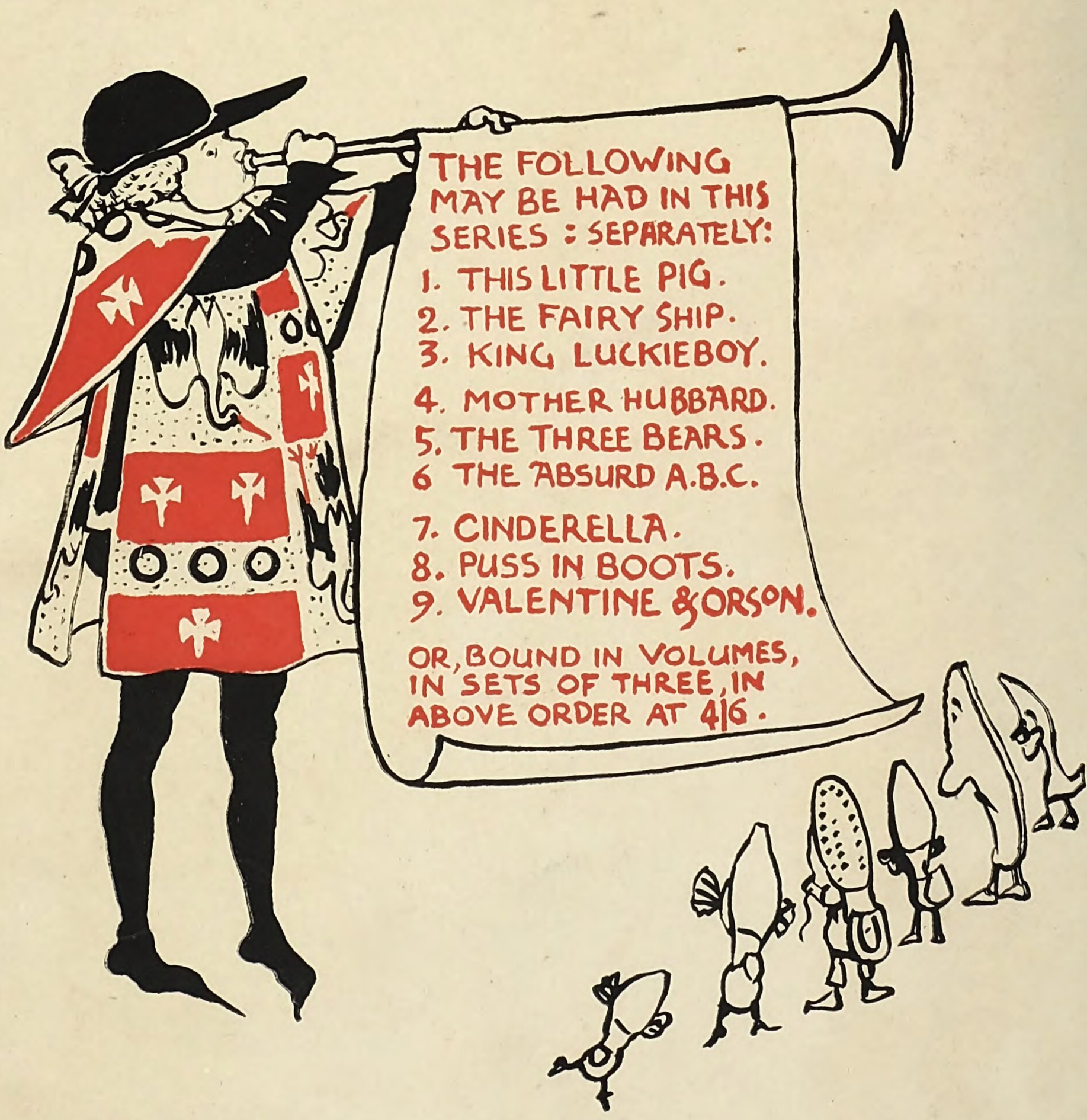
She promised, and with joyful heart she gained the palace hall,
And danced, and laughed, and looked indeed the fairest of them all.
The King's son danced with her, and praised her lovely shape and air;
All treated her as if she were the greatest lady there:
But in good time she slipped away, and waited safe at home,
In kitchen corner sitting till her sisters back should come;
And when they came they told her all about the stranger fair,
And what she wore, and how she looked, and how she did her hair.
Next night another ball was held—the sisters dressed, and went,
And pretty Cinderella, too, by Godmother was sent.

The Prince danced with her every dance, and praised her more and more,
And laughed and talked so much, that when the clock 'gan strike the hour—
The fatal hour of twelve—it took her greatly by surprise ;
She turned and fled so quick before the Prince's wondering eyes,
That in her haste to reach her coach she dropped her crystal shoe ;
She had no time to pick it up, as towards home she flew.
The sisters later home returned, and told her all they knew
About the lady and the Prince, and all of it was true.
As Cinderella heard them talk, she turned away her head,
Nor said a word that might not fit her place of kitchen-maid.

Next day was proclamation made : "Whereas, a crystal shoe
Has been discovered at the ball, who is the owner—who?
All ladies now must try it on ; the Prince will marry her,
Whoe'er it be, who easily the crystal shoe can wear."
No foot was found to fit the shoe ; they tried throughout the
town ;
At last they came unto this house, and called the ladies down.
The sisters try to get it on, and pull, and push, and squeeze,
When Cinderella calmly said, "Allow me, if you please."
The sisters scorned her for the thought, and much surprise
they knew,
When Cinderella from her pocket pulled the fellow shoe.
She tried them on—they fit—and she, no longer kitchen-
maid,
Stands up to meet the Prince in all her beauty fair arrayed.

Now do the sisters kneel, and beg forgiveness for their pride;
And she is kind, as well becomes a noble Prince's bride.
The wedding was most grand, and when they started on their tour,
The King and Queen and all the court were standing round the door;
And, wishing that for them all happy things might come to pass,
They all threw after them for luck old slippers—not of glass.
The sisters, full of envy, are reported to have said,
"We'll work ourselves, and never have another kitchen-maid.
We have been idle all our lives,—we'll try another way,
And be industrious instead—it really seems to pay."





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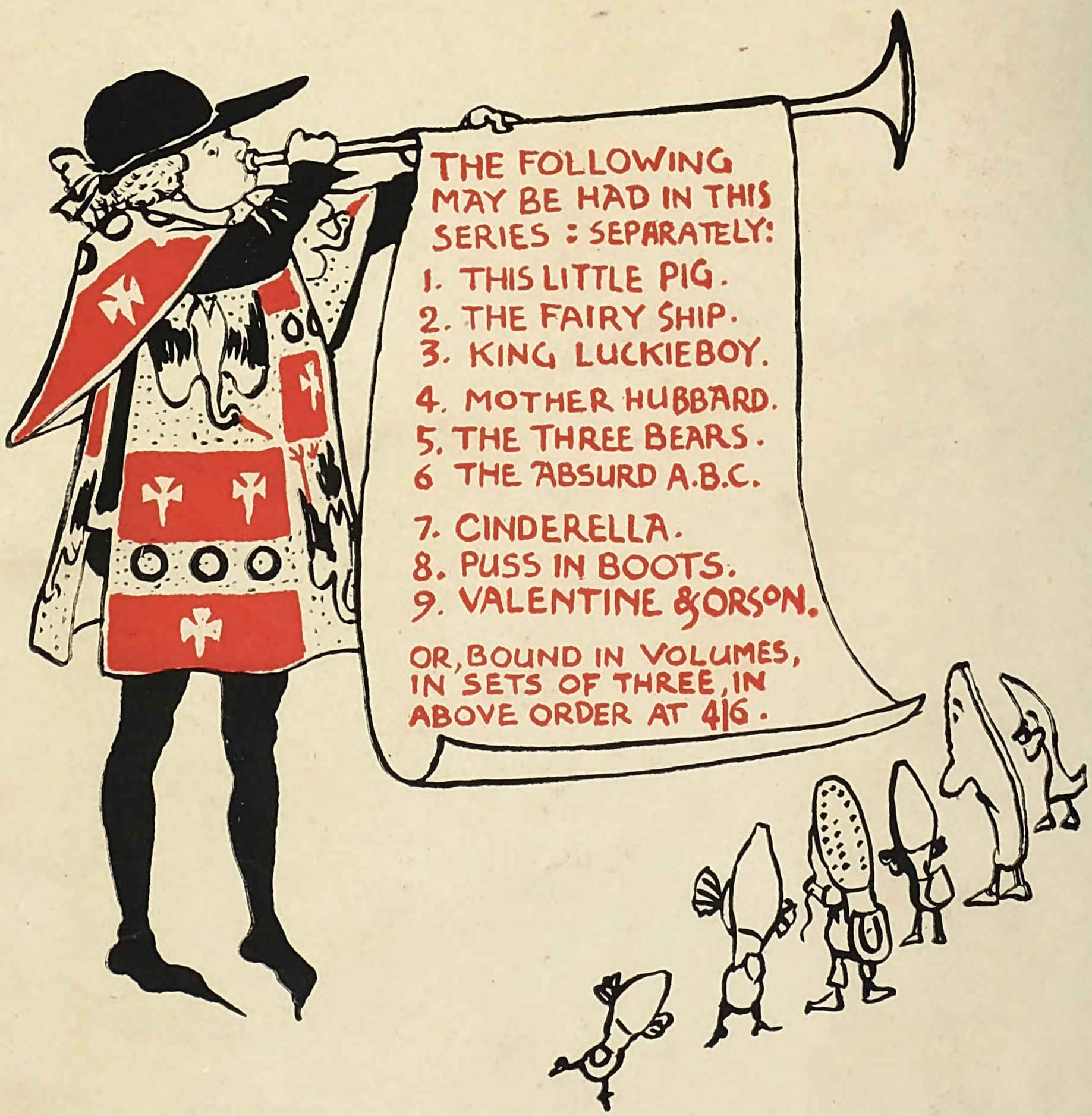

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